

[*Laughter*] And the Republicans agree with them, and the Democrats in the Senate basically agree with me. And I come from a—I had my first .22 when I was 12. But I think there's evidence here, in the lower crime rate and the less violence, and I don't think this country is safe enough. But I just want you to remember that.

It's a big election, just as important as '92 and '96. I think the question is, what are we going to do with our prosperity? There are real differences with real consequences. But only one party really wants you to know what the differences are. I think that's a pretty good argument for our side.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:53 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Roy M. Spence, Jr., and his wife, Mary; musician Ray Benson; former Governors Ann Richards and Dolph Briscoe, Jr., of Texas; former Representative J. J. (Jake) Pickle; former Texas Land Commissioner Garry Mauro and his wife, Judith; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; U.S. Senatorial candidate George Allen; and Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association.

Statement on Congressional Action on the Tobacco Settlement Lawsuit

June 19, 2000

Last year the Department of Justice filed a civil lawsuit against the tobacco companies to recover the billions of dollars the Federal Government spends each year on tobacco-related health care costs. Tobacco-caused diseases kill more than 400,000 Americans each year and cost billions in health care costs, including more than \$20 billion in Federal payments under Medicare and other programs. The Justice Department's suit would simply hold the tobacco industry financially responsible for reimbursement of these costs.

The suit is based on overwhelming evidence, much of it from the tobacco industry's own documents. This evidence shows that the tobacco companies have conspired over the past 50 years to defraud and mislead the

American public and to conceal information about the effects of smoking.

The Congress, in its appropriations bills, is undermining this lawsuit by preventing the agencies that have been harmed and that could recover billions—the Defense Department, the Veterans Administration, and the Department of Health and Human Services—from providing any support. If Congress cuts off funding for this lawsuit or interferes with the Justice Department's pursuit of the lawsuit, Congress will be capitulating to the tobacco industry once again at the expense of taxpayers and their children.

It would be wrong for Congress to undermine the authority of the Department of Justice and block this lawsuit rather than allow it to be decided on its merits in court. I call on Congress to support rather than undermine these efforts and allow the Justice Department to keep working to give taxpayers their day in court.

Statement on Greece's Entry Into the Economic and Monetary Union

June 19, 2000

I congratulate Prime Minister Simitis and the Greek people on the decision today at the EU Summit in Portugal to bring Greece into the EU's Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), effective January 1, 2001. Reaching agreement to become a full member of the EMU a year before the euro currency is introduced demonstrates Greece's remarkable economic progress in recent years. This economic success complements Greece's increasingly active political role within the EU.

Through determination and hard work, Greece succeeded in meeting all the Maastricht Treaty economic criteria. Entry into the EMU is not the end of the race but the start of a challenging new phase of economic reform. We wish the Hellenic Republic every success as it moves ahead and hope this will usher in a new era of increased trade and investment between our two nations.

Statement on Easing Sanctions Against North Korea

June 19, 2000

Since last September, when I announced the measures being implemented today to ease sanctions against North Korea, North Korea has maintained its moratorium on missile tests. These measures are supported by our close allies in the region and are part of the process of close coordination between the United States, Japan, and South Korea recommended by former Secretary of Defense William Perry. We will continue to build on these efforts and on the recent North-South summit to achieve additional progress in addressing our common proliferation concerns.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in Austin

June 19, 2000

Thank you. I feel—first of all, I feel a little sorry for all of you. You have to look at me, and I'm looking at all this, behind you. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Lynn and Tom for making us feel so welcome in this beautiful, beautiful place. And I want to thank them and Ben and Melanie and everyone else who worked on this dinner tonight, for its success. I want to thank Roy and Mary Spence, who hosted me earlier, for the Democratic Senate candidates and for what they did.

Thank you, Mayor Watson; we're glad to be here. Thank you, Governor Richards. Thank you, Garry Mauro. Thank you, Liz Carpenter, my old friend. Thank you, B. and Audrey Rapoport; and Dan Morales and John Sharp. Thank you, all. And I'd like to say a special word of thanks to Luci Johnson and, through her, to her mother and her entire family for what they have meant to the United States.

And I want to thank Lyle Lovett for being a good Democrat and a good friend to me, and always being there when I've needed him over the years. He made me think that even on my bad-hair days, I could still be

President. *[Laughter]* That was probably the last song he'll ever sing for me. *[Laughter]*

I also want to tell you how much I admire and appreciate the work that I've had the chance to do with Tom Daschle and Bob Torricelli and Chuck Robb and Pat Leahy and Ron Wyden. We really do have a big percentage—over 10 percent of our caucus here tonight. And maybe Ann is right; maybe it's because Texas needs Senators, and we need money, but for whatever reason, they're here. And I hope you'll take advantage of it.

Let me say, as is usually the case when I get up to speak, everything that needs to be said has already been said, but not everyone has said it. *[Laughter]* But I'd like to just make a comment or two, if I might.

First of all, I've had a lot of friends here in Texas, and especially in Austin. And as I look back on the last 7½ years and I look forward to the next, approximately, 7 months I have to serve, I would just like to say, thank you. Thank you for your help. Thank you for staying with us. Thank you for giving me and Al Gore and Hillary and Tipper and our entire administration the chance to do what we've done for the last 7½ years. I've had a wonderful time doing it, and I am very grateful that the results turned out to be pretty good for you, as well as for us. It's been a joy.

Now, I also want to say to you that I thought a lot back in 1992 about what I would like America to be like in 2000, if I should be fortunate enough to be elected and to be reelected. And I believe that one of the reasons that we had some success is that I'd worked as a Governor for a dozen years, through very difficult economic times. I had had a chance to try to come to grips with the major economic and educational and other challenges of the day. And I had a pretty clear idea about what I wanted to do if I got elected. And it turned out that the ideas that I and many others who worked with me over a decade developed worked pretty well.

I say that to make this point. I'm glad that we've got the longest economic expansion in history. I'm very glad that we have the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded. I am profoundly grateful that we have a 20-